The National Heritage Fellowships 1987

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1987

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS
FOLK ARTS PROGRAM

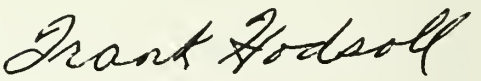
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1987

Welcome to the sixth year of the National Heritage Fellowships, a joyful occasion sponsored annually by the National Endowment for the Arts through its Folk Arts Program.

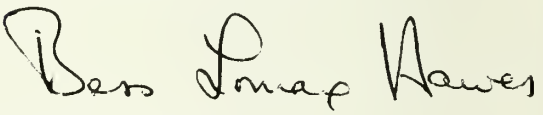
That the United States is a nation of immigrants has become a truism. We take justifiable pride in the hospitality our broad landscape has shown to the many human beings of different languages, colors, histories and cultural systems who have reached—sometimes even unwillingly—these shores. Less often, perhaps, do we recognize that throughout history no people who have undertaken the sometimes frightening journey to this new land have come empty-handed. Each has brought with them treasures of heart and hand skills that have illuminated the unfamiliar landscape, lifted up the spirit and created pride and determination. They still do.

These Fellowships allow us, then, to bring to public attention the ingenuity and elegance of the Hispanic tinware of northern New Mexico, of the Hawaiian slack-key guitar style, of the *a capella* religious hymn tradition of the southern Blacks. They also allow us to point out that distinguished folk art can be found in every section of the United States, this year adding Wisconsin, Michigan, New Hampshire and the Virgin Islands to our roster of represented states. Most of all they allow us to honor the particular individuals who have been selected as demonstrating the highest form of their particular artistic tradition. These are experienced, sophisticated and senior artists who have themselves learned from other senior artists now gone from us, who have practiced their art with diligence and rigor, and who have contributed of their own creative brilliance to the art they love.

Every year in the fall, we present to the American people a group of these artists, nominated by the public at large, selected by the advisory panel of the Folk Arts Program and reviewed by the National Council for the Arts. It is a proud responsibility. Each one joins the long line of senior artists and artisans, who have been honored in years before, each a shining exemplar of a particular artistic tradition. Taken altogether, they create a view of our nation we rarely see: a mosaic or a patchwork that embodies the true richness of our diverse peoples. We invite you to join with us in appreciating, in savoring, and in celebrating our Heritage Fellowships for 1987.



Frank Hodsoll
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts



Bess Lomax Hawes
Program Director
Folk Arts Program
National Endowment for the Arts

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This ceremony and related activities have been planned with the assistance of the National Council for the Traditional Arts (N.C.T.A.), a private non-profit corporation founded in 1933, dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. The National Endowment for the Arts would like to thank the N.C.T.A., the Joseph Martinson Memorial Fund, The Rouse Company and WETA-FM for their assistance in the presentation of these fellowships.

National Heritage Fellowships are open to exemplary master folk artists and artisans who are nominated by one or more citizens for the one-time-only awards. For information about nominating a folk artist or artisan for a fellowship, write:

National Heritage Fellowships
Folk Arts Program
The National Endowment for the Arts
1100 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20506

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1987 National Heritage Fellowship Awardees

Juan Alindato

Masking is one of the oldest forms of visual fantasy known to humankind. The mask, by physically removing our physical identity from sight, can thereby cause an immediate separation from the natural world into the supernatural. The power of the mask to transfigure the normal and mundane into the fantastic and other worldly has attracted craftsworkers in every corner of the world. But a few of them, like Juan Alindato of Puerto Rico, through imagination, devotion, and commitment, become masters of the art of the mask.

Sr. Alindato began making masks as a newlywed, learning from his wife's aunt. Masks were nothing new to him though. Every year at *carnaval* time in his home town of Ponce, masked figures known as *vejigantes* would wander the streets, sending young children fleeing from their paths, screaming with fear and delight. Vejigantes date in Puerto Rico from at least the mid-eighteenth century and take their name from the Spanish word *vejiga*, or "bladder," as they carry with them an inflated cow bladder attached to a small stick, striking those who dare to get near them, harmlessly, but to great psychic effect. More frightening still are the masks themselves. In a style unique to Ponce, and other parts of southern Puerto Rico, masks traditionally are of papier maché and take the shape of terrifying apparitions of horned devil-like creatures. Some of the more elaborate masks, such as those of Juan Alindato, have elongated snouts with flaring nostrils, menacing teeth, and many horns jutting forward from all sides, enough to startle adults as well as youngsters.

Juan Alindato is known as both an important bearer of tradition and as a master artist who has excelled to such a degree in his art form that his masks are sought not only by carnival goers but by art collectors as well for their imposing beauty and fine workmanship. His masks have been exhibited in the United States, Spain, Bulgaria, and of course, Puerto Rico. In spite of the widespread recognition of his mastery, he remains a humble, cordial, gentle man, dedicated to his family and neighbors. He has taught his wife, children and grandchild maskmaking and his mask business is now a family operation.

Now retired after many years as a dockworker, Sr. Alindato spends even more of his time creating his prized *mascaras de carton* and sharing his skills with his family and fellow *Poncenos*.

Louis Bashell

The so-called "polka belt" runs north to Buffalo, New York, east to Newark (not crossing the Hudson River), south to the Pennsylvania line, and then west through Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, the Dakotas and Nebraska, including northern Indiana and northern Illinois. Within its bounds live the majority of America's polka enthusiasts, and some say that their national capital city is Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Louis Bashell was born in Milwaukee in 1914 to a family that had recently immigrated from Slovenia (then a part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, now a republic within the nation of Yugoslavia.) Louis Bashell's father had learned to make good wine and beer in the old country and was also a master of the diatonic button accordion—skills that stood him in good stead when, on the day of his son's birth, he opened his own corner tavern in the Walker's Point neighborhood. He turned over his music-making responsibilities to his precocious son, Louis, as soon as he could, and Louis remembers at age seven sitting on a table with his father's button box in his lap playing Slovenian folk tunes for his father's patrons.

Louis became an outstanding instrumentalist and by his teens frequently hired out to play at weddings and other socials, both as a soloist and as the organizer of a small dance band. During the height of the polka craze of the 1940s, a recording of a Slovenian folk song, "Zidana marela" or "Silk Umbrella" that he had produced through a local recording company began to sell out as fast as the recordings were pressed. RCA Victor offered him an exclusive recording contract, and he seemed headed for a national popular music career; but when pressed by music industry representatives to

Above:
Juan Alindato
photo by Jack Delano

Below:
Louis Bashell
photo courtesy of the
Milwaukee Journal

take his group on extensive nationwide tours, Mr. Bashell balked. A devoted family man with wife and children, he did not want to be away from home that much; he also did not want interference from A&R men on questions of repertoire and style.

He made his choice and continued to play in Wisconsin communities in his Wisconsin style. And his devotion to his own people and his own state has been reciprocated. For over forty years his band has worked four nights a week, turning down jobs regularly on the other three. Though 70 years old now, he has no plans to retire. Dozens of younger musicians who have either worked with or followed his band have gone on to form groups of their own. They readily and warmly acknowledge their debt to Louis Bashell whose emphasis on clarity, traditionality and simplicity, his lifelong determination to "play it straight and play it right," foregoing meaningless virtuosity and espousing solid musicianship, have made him an exemplar worth following.

GENOVEVA CASTELLANOZ

Señora Castellanoz lives in the town of Nyssa, Oregon, in the northern fringe of Hispanic migration and settlement in the intermountain west. This vast area extends from southeastern Idaho through the Snake River Plain into eastern Oregon. The many Mexican-Americans living in this region are far from the centers of Hispanic culture and Hispanic institutions and support systems. Their artists thus play a central role in preserving community unity, self-esteem and cultural pride.

Sra. Castellanoz's art form, moreover, is occasioned exclusively by community celebrations, specifically, weddings and *quinceaneras*. The quinceanera (fifteenth birthday) is a rite of passage which introduces the young woman to the community of adults and reminds her of her adult responsibilities. Traditionally each relative contributes one of the necessary items for the quinceanera girl's outfit, the white dress and other articles of clothing, a pillow for kneeling, the *corona*, a crown of flowers, also white, symbolizing purity and innocence. She may

Above:
Genoveva Castellanoz
photo by Jan Boles

Below:
T.E. "Brownie" Ford
photo by Debra Reingold,
Arizona Daily Star

also be preceded into the ceremony by a group of fourteen other girls, one for each year of her life—a one year old, a two year old and so on up to the quinceanera herself who makes fifteen.

The corona, or crown, is central to the aesthetics of the quinceanera event itself, as necessary as the ring in a wedding ceremony. Sra. Castellanoz is the only corona maker in this enormous region; she is sought out by parents and families who journey hundreds of miles to consult her. Each corona and bouquet for the quinceanera is designed especially; each wedding bouquet, boutonniere and corona is created out of hand-cut paper petals, hand-dipped in wax, sculpted individually by experience and the hours of observation she has given to studying the living flowers she uses as models.

Anyone who sees Sra. Castellanoz's exquisite creations of household candlewax and folded paper is moved by their fragile beauty. But Sra. Castellanoz knows they are of greater importance. She believes each flower has a mind of its own; each one "speaks." She can't make it do what it doesn't want to do. We must also understand, she believes, that there are traditions "we have that are beautiful and speak. They don't just exist. They have meaning. They say something and we must be educated about what they are saying." So when young women come to her she presents them with more than her art work; she gives them also an education in their culture, their traditions, and the aesthetic dreams of a proud people. It is not often we have a chance to honor not only an exquisite craftsworker but a person of aesthetic sensibility whose work is central to an entire community.

Thomas Edison "Brownie" Ford

Brownie Ford is half-Comanche by ancestry and was born in 1904 at Gum Springs in the Oklahoma Territory. At the age of twelve, he left home and joined a Wild West show. Since then he has crisscrossed the United States working as a rodeo rider, ranch-hand, horse trainer,

construction worker, timber hauler, truck driver, oil field roughneck, and country-western musician.

Today Brownie lives in Hebert in northeastern Louisiana where he moved hoping to make a success in the cattle business. He's gone broke at that three times and now points out that the "*real* smart cattle men are the ones who have oil derricks for the cows to scratch their backs on." These days he repairs saddles, makes an occasional bridle or piece of horse tack, crafts hide-bottomed chairs by hand, tells stories and sings songs to his friends and neighbors while "Miss Cody," his wife of many years, runs a small grocery store in front of their home on the shores of Lake Lafourche.

Brownie Ford is an exemplar of the southeast Texas-Louisiana "woods cowboy." His terrain is unique—grassy hummocks over swampland—and he sometimes wears his spurs over rubber boots when his neighbors ask him to lend a hand. He maintains, "Hell, anybody can punch cows on dry land; you might call what we do down here high-water herding." Witty, a gifted raconteur, his total repertory of traditional tales has yet to be recorded along with his musings on the complexity of being half-cowboy and half-Indian in the same body, and his many stories about early days in the Territory.

His greatest gift, however, may be his deep resonant voice and his extensive repertory of cowboy songs, frontier ballads, sentimental parlor ditties of the eighties and nineties and early country western tunes. He accompanies himself on guitar in the spare laconic style so favored by the classic western singers who like to "speak the words out plain" and don't care for fancy accompaniment that might distract from the story they're telling in song. He knows the great songs, the great texts, and the great tunes; listening to his version of "The Streets of Laredo" is, for any southwesterner, like coming home. His deep, mellow voice holds a crowd like a magnet and today, in his eighties, Brownie can pick the jobs that he cares to fill—a little leather work one day, a local or national folk festival the next, serene and confident in his ability to turn a rawhide braid or a melodic line with the very best of them. He is a classic figure in the world of the western cowboy.

Kansuma Fujima

Mme. Kansuma Fujima was born Sumako Hamaguchi in San Francisco, California in 1918. When she was three years old, her family moved to Los Angeles, and she has lived there ever since except for three years in an internment camp. At the age of nine, rather late for a Japanese child whose training traditionally begins on the sixth day of the sixth month of one's sixth year, she began training in dance, soon taking starring roles in a fifteen-member girls' *kabuki* group.

Upon her graduation from high school, she decided to study her art more thoroughly in Japan where she became a student of Kikugoro Onoe VI, an outstanding kabuki star who ran an acting school. For four years she studied acting, dancing, kimono dress and etiquette, *samisen* and *tokiwazu* music, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and the percussion instruments of *tsuzumi* and *taiko*. In the world of kabuki of that period, women were not allowed to perform; the young girl was ridiculed as "the girl from America" and put into competition against the best of Japan's young students. Her will power and determination carried her through the rigors of her training and in 1938, she was granted her professional name of Kansuma. For her professional debut, she was also given permission by Kikugoro to dance one of his most famous dances, a privilege rarely granted and only to exceptional students.

Within a month after returning to the United States, Mme. Fujima opened her first dance studio in Los Angeles, later adding classes in Norwalk, Gardena, and West Los Angeles. With the outbreak of World War II, her life and career were totally disrupted. She and her parents were arrested and taken to various "relocation centers" finally reassembling in a camp in Arkansas where she attempted to give her fellow detainees some relaxation and comfort through her art, though all she had was a kimono, a fan and one recording of Japanese music. Later, camp authorities gave her special permission to return to Los Angeles, under armed guard, to pick up her costumes and records; until the war's end, she taught and entertained in various

Kansuma Fujima as Yayoi, the Lady-in-waiting in "Kagami-Jishi"

internment camps.

She returned to Los Angeles and embarked on a strenuous schedule of performances, touring, teaching, and the production of various Japanese cultural events and programs. She has trained in her lifetime over 1000 dancers, 26 of whom, including her daughter, have been granted professional standing by kabuki grandmasters. In recent years she has been forbidden by her physicians to both dance and teach. Mme. Fujima has elected the latter course in order to continue preserving and promoting the cultural heritage for younger Japanese-Americans rather than have it end with professional fame for herself alone.

CLAUDE JOSEPH JOHNSON

Dr. Claude Joseph Johnson was born in Douglasville, Georgia in 1913. His father, William Johnson, was a well-known teacher and leader in the ancient style of shape-note hymn singing, his grandmother, a famous singer of lined-out hymns and spirituals. C.J. Johnson led his first shape-note song, "The Prodigal Son," at the age of five, while standing on a table in the front of the church. He gave his trial sermon and was ordained for the ministry in the Missionary Baptist Church at the age of ten; known as "the Boy Preacher from Atlanta," he began his first full-time pastorate at the age of twelve.

In 1939 he determined to complete his education and began a twenty year dedication to his formal education for the ministry at the Morehouse School of Religion, the American Theological Seminary and the Carver Bible Institute, eventually earning his B.D., B.Th., and D.D. degrees. He has lived, preached and sung in Atlanta since he was five years old.

In 1965 he began what was to prove an extraordinary addition to his work—the issuance of commercial recordings of his music, mostly on the Savoy label. Many black preachers had recorded sermons and indeed entire formal services; many other standardized recordings of black religious music had been released. But Rev. Johnson's records—now numbering twenty—feature his unaccompanied

Above:
C.J. Johnson
photo by Annie Archbold

Below:
Raymond Kane
photo by Lynn Martin, courtesy of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts

singing of hymns and country spirituals, sometimes joined by his congregation, and all of his recordings have been made in church rather than a recording studio. In 1970 his recording "I Wanna Go Where Jesus Is" received a gold record.

The rural singing styles that Dr. Johnson continues in the heart of black Atlanta are marked by a flexible use of the singing voice including every possible expressive effect from growls to cries; an absence of instrumental accompaniment so that rhythm, too, can be flexible and expressive; frequent use of vocal ornamentation including glissandi and melisma; and a complex relationship with the accompanying chorus/audience particular to the older Black spiritual style. Normally referred to as "lining out," this style began during slavery when hymn books were unobtainable and literacy punished; hymns were therefore 'dictated,' sung a line at a time, the congregation echoing the lead voice, in a pattern of vocal organization widespread in black Africa. Over centuries the effects have become subtler, lead voice and congregation over-lapping, supporting and decorating the elongated hymn tunes until an extraordinary effect sometimes called 'surge singing' has been achieved. When Dr. Johnson leads his congregation, his sure and supple voice encourages and leads, adds passion and conviction, soothes and quietens.

Raymond Kaleoalohapoinaoleohele-manu Kane

They say that the art of the slack key guitar (*ki ho'alu*) is to Hawaii as the flamenco guitar is to Spain and the Delta blues guitar is to Mississippi. Each style represents the music indigenous to the particular areas as expressed through a single instrument—the six string guitar; each style is a unique contribution to the world of music.

Central to the particular "sound" of slack key is the use of open tunings, whereby the six strings are changed from the classical guitar tuning to ones based upon open chords. This

Above:
Wade Mainer
photo by Charles Tompkins

Below:
Sylvester McIntosh
photo by Mary Jane Soule

remarkable and creative style is traditionally learned by imitation (without notation or scores); many of the tunings are standard and widely known; others are kept secret so that it is not unusual for a slack key guitarist to turn away from an audience to tune so that no one can copy his private tuning. Raymond Kane, who grew up in Nanakuli, a district on the island of Oahu with a large ethnic Hawaiian population, began to learn at the age of nine. "On the beach in Nanakuli, it was hard to convince the old folks to teach me. They liked their fish and I was a good diver to catch the fish. So we traded—I caught the fish, they teach me slack key."

Later Raymond Kane worked with Albert Kawelo and Henry Kapuana from the Island of Ni'ihau, the only island of the Hawaiian chain where ethnic Hawaiians are still the majority population and the Hawaiian language is still the mother tongue. Mr. Kane is today one of the few slack key guitarists to sing with his instrument; he maintains the old repertory of songs he learned sixty years ago unaffected by the modern trend to "rearrange" older Hawaiian tunes, incorporating electronic instruments and faster tempi. Though retired and in frail health, he gives freely of his time, both in performances and instruction. He has recently taken on an apprentice, a talented high school senior whose work he praises. He appears at many community concerts; in 1973 he appeared in solo concert at the Orvis Auditorium of the University of Hawaii, the only artist to ever give a full-length solo slack-key concert. It was an important event, a turning point for increased interest in this delicate, supremely musical, style. Raymond Kane's music is aural testimony to his best description: "the purest of the living ki ho'alu artists."

Wade Mainer

In an artistic career that spans five decades and ranges from spontaneous frolics for cotton mill workers to command performances for kings, Wade Mainer's life story could be read as a history of traditional Appalachian music in America. The story brings together deeply-

rooted family music with modern media such as the radio and phonograph records; it combines Anglo-American and Afro-American instruments and sounds to form a distinctly new regional style, and it exhibits a strength of deeply-felt convictions, religious and artistic, resulting in an integrity which resonates throughout.

Wade Mainer, born in 1907, grew up near Weaverville, North Carolina, in the Blue Ridge Mountains north of Asheville. He moved to Concord, North Carolina in the 1930's to join his brother, J.E. Mainer, at work in the cotton mill. The brothers formed a string band, with Wade on banjo and J.E. on fiddle, to play at local fiddler's conventions and social gatherings.

In 1934 J.W. Fincher, head of Crazy Water Crystals (a patent medicine), asked them to appear on the Crazy Water Crystal Barn Dance, a radio program broadcast from Charlotte, North Carolina. The popularity of the group performing under the title "J.E. Mainer and the Crazy Mountaineers," led to radio appearances throughout the south. In 1935 the band recorded fourteen songs in Atlanta for the RCA Victor Bluebird Label, including their biggest hit, "Maple on the Hill," a song composed in the 1890's by Gussie L. Davis, a popular black lyricist, which has since become a country standard.

Wade formed his own group in 1936 and continued to perform on the radio and to make recordings. Always his groups were noted for their traditional repertoire and Wade's distinctively melodic two-finger banjo picking style that was a personal trademark. Between 1935 and 1941 various Mainer combinations recorded over 165 songs for RCA Victor, making them some of the most heavily recorded country artists of that era.

Mainer left the music business in 1953. Along with many Appalachian out-migrants of that period he moved to Flint, Michigan, where he worked for General Motors until his retirement. Most of this time he performed religious music at local church functions.

During the 1970's there was a renewal of interest in "old-time" music and, with some persuasion from fans, Wade Mainer began to play music again, accompanied by his wife, Julia, who is a fine traditional singer in her own right. Wade Mainer's performances today resemble very much those of fifty years ago—still they are distinguished by artistic mastery and cultural integrity.

SYLVESTER MCINTOSH

Sylvester McIntosh, also known as "Mac" and "Blinky," was born on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands in 1934, the son of Ivan McIntosh, respected Crucian saxophonist. At the age of 15, Sylvester began playing guitar in his father's band, and he would practice the many tunes his father taught him as he traveled long distances on foot across the island, guitar in hand. His mother, Ethel, also Crucian born, possessed an extensive repertoire of local songs and song texts. Sylvester vividly remembers many of the ancient Crucian melodies his mother would sing while busying herself around the house. While growing up Sylvester was very taken with the many traditional performers around the Frederiksted area and the traditional lyrics and speeches of local folk orators. He became an active member in the "Wild Indians," a "masquerade" troupe that was prominent in organizing the costuming, music and dance activities of the annual carnival celebrations. In the mid-fifties, he formed his first "scratch band," as the local ensembles of cane flute, gourd rasp, triangle, guitar, drum and bass were called. His group, the *Pond Bush Hot Shots*, took their name from their neighborhood, the Pond Bush section of Frederiksted. Sylvester played guitar in the *Hot Shots* and in the next group he organized, the *Clefs*.

McIntosh's thorough grounding in Crucian traditional music served him well in the 1960s, when he was invited to join the island's leading quadrille band, the *Joe Parris Hot Shots*, as its lead saxophone player. During the resurgence of the centuries-old tradition of quadrille dancing in the 1970s, he recorded three albums as lead vocalist and saxophone player with the Joe Parris group. After a stint with the influential scratch band *Jamsie and the Happy Seven* in the late 1970s, he went on to form his current band, *Blinky and the Roadmasters*, taking its

Allison "Totie" Montana photo by Kathy Anderson, courtesy of the New Orleans Times-Picayune

name from his own daytime profession as a road crew boss with the St. Croix Department of Public Works, operating heavy equipment. With the *Roadmasters*, he continues to play traditional Crucian music regularly at quadrille dances, festivals, private parties, and nightclubs. He is the father of seven children and an avid sports fan. Although he is relatively young, 53, he is widely respected by island residents, especially other musicians, as the authoritative source for information on older Crucian musical traditions.

Allison "Totie" Montana

Though most television coverage of the New Orleans Mardi Gras concentrates on parading carnival clubs led by kings "Comus" and "Rex" on floats depicting scenes from Greek mythology, another celebration is taking place in the Black districts. Hundreds of people parade through the streets accompanied by tambourines and drums, singing in African call-and-response style, following groups of black men, fantastically arrayed in costumes of thousands of hand-sewn beads, plumes, feathers, and rhinestones. These are the Black Indian tribes of New Orleans. Their origins lie deep in the mists of history.

Allison Montana is Big Chief of the Yellow Pocahontas Tribe; he inherited his position from his father over forty years ago and he remains today one of the most respected leaders of what is generally considered to be the oldest and purest tribe of the city. His individual artistry is recognized by all; he is a gifted costume designer, a brilliant dancer and song leader, and an eloquent artistic director of his group.

He traces his tradition back to 1880 when his great-uncle, Chief Becate, founded the tribe; it is said he was part Afro-American and part American Indian. The organization of the tribal parade reflects a humorous and fantasy-filled interplay between two cultures, an African cultural style using Indian motifs. The various Chiefs march in the rear followed by a large group of supporters not in costume and referred to as the "second line." Ahead of them runs the Spyboy, a costumed scout who runs down the center of the street a block or two ahead sending back signals to "Flagboy," a bearer of the tribal banner, who, in turn, relays signals announcing "trouble" or "all clear" to the Chiefs. In the old days there used to be physical trouble—even bloodshed—when two tribes met; today, explains Chief Montana, "they try to

outdress one another."

Costumery, songs, dancing all are planned, prepared and practiced for months before the great day of Mardi Gras, and thus draw the Black neighborhoods together in collective aesthetic Sunday rehearsals, held after church obligations have been met, and involving three and four hours of intensive dance and musical practice. "After a practice," one Black Indian said, "you feel good . . . you get your blood all warmed up . . . and you begin to feel yourself, the real you . . . when the tambourines start to ringing . . . and then after the practice, you can go home and sew (your costume) all night." And when the time for practice is past, on the great day, the tribes march in their glory through the streets, making prearranged stops to rest and greet friends and accept food and drink from their admirers, and to dance and to sing.

Alex Moore, Sr.
photo by David R. Allen

ALEX MOORE, SR.

The popular image of the rambling bluesman, a modern-day wandering minstrel, does not apply in the case of Alex Moore, renowned blues piano player of Dallas, Texas. He was "rediscovered" by blues scholars in the 1960s sitting on the screened porch of a bar barely a hundred yards from the street where he was born. Although Mr. Moore first recorded in 1929 and continued to appear on recordings in each of the next four decades, he has spent most of his eighty-nine years in Dallas supporting himself in other occupations and performing blues for his personal pleasure.

Alex Moore's piano stylings combine the blues, ragtime, barrelhouse and boogie-woogie sounds commonly heard in clubs and bars in the southwest. Moore stated that there was "an old piece of a piano in every shack and alley" in Dallas and he taught himself by watching other players and practicing when he got a chance. Moore has developed a distinctive piano style which combines steady bass figures with the left hand, resembling boogie-woogie, overlain with fluid right hand melodies. In response to a comment about his playing, Moore once said, "my fingers know what I'm doing, I don't." In the blues tradition, lyrics accompanying his playing are often improvised—he also has whistled on several of his recordings, earning for himself the nickname "Whistlin'" Alex Moore. Blues scholar Paul Oliver has said of him: "He is a true original, a folk blues singer of the city who can sit at the piano and improvise endlessly piano themes and blues verses that are sometimes startling, sometimes comic, sometimes grim, and very often are pure poetry."

Since his rediscovery Moore has performed before audiences in such prestigious venues as London's Royal Albert Hall, but he still is most pleased with the well-deserved recognition he has received from members of his own local community. In 1983 the Mayor of Dallas declared June 17th "Alex 'Blues Artist' Moore Day." Some of his most enjoyable moments seem to be those he spends at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Senior Citizen's Center in south Dallas where he regularly entertains on the piano. While he may appreciate the interest of his many fans worldwide and the accolades of blues scholars, Mr. Moore might ask us to note the comments of his fellow senior citizens when they cited him as Senior Citizen of the Month—"Very easy to get along with, always cooperative in every way, and everybody loves him. He sings, plays a whole lot of piano, and sometimes he whistles. And he's a good domino player."

Senaida Romero
photo courtesy of
Albuquerque Journal

Emilio Romero
photo courtesy of
Albuquerque Journal

EMILIO AND SENAIDA ROMERO

The shaping from tin of both utilitarian wares and devotional pieces admired for their beauty—candle holders, sconces, crucifixes, and *nichos* (frames for saints' figures)—runs deep in the history of Hispanic peoples in the New World. Scarce resources on the Southwest frontier, however, limited the art of the tinmakers there until the mid-nineteenth century when the tin can was invented and put into use by Napoleon's armies. The U.S. Army soon followed suit, and the 5-pound tin cans for lard and lamp oil they discarded were salvaged by local artisans and fueled a new generation of New Mexican tinsmiths. Today, although only a handful of traditional tinsmiths remain, forging beautiful objects from "the poor man's silver" is one of New Mexico's most cherished folk art traditions.

Emilio and Senaida Romero have worked together as a team since they were wed in 1930. Emilio was born in Santa Fe in 1910 and Senaida in Ojo de Vaca, New Mexico, now a ghost town, in 1909. A trained sheetmetal worker, Sr. Romero was employed in Los Alamos during the building of the atom bomb in the 1940s. He began making his own experiments in tin about 45 years ago, creating work that he sold occasionally to help support his family during the Depression. Sra. Romero remembers her grandfather working tin as a craftsman, loading his supply into a wagon and traveling through the northern New Mexican villages for weeks at a time, returning to his family laden with beans, corn, and other goods he had traded for his tin wares. For the Romeros, the craft became a family affair, with Sr. Romero adapting tools from his experience with sheet metal to serve the needs of the tin craft. He has built and modified many implements which the couple then used for working tin, putting their personal stamp on the craft yet never compromising on its spontaneity and integrity. Meanwhile, Sra. Romero, who was adept at the art of *colcha* (coverlet) embroidery, used in northern New Mexico for over 100 years to adorn the churches and altar pieces, had the idea of placing her colcha pieces in orna-

mented tin frames. Many of the works of tin or tin and colcha embroidery they have created together over the years are in the permanent collections of museums in the United States and abroad. Through their lives and work, the Romeros have greatly influenced many, including their seven children, several of whom themselves have become traditional New Mexican *artesanos*.

Newton Washburn

Newton Washburn was born in Stowe, Vermont, in 1915, a member of the Sweetser family. The Sweetsers have been known for their brown ash split baskets since at least 1850 and probably before. The original Sweetser, they say, came to Vermont from Switzerland in the late 18th century; his son married a woman of the Abenaki Indian tribe, Lydia Hill. So when the young Newton Washburn was set to learn the craft of basketry from his mother, he represented the fourth generation in a direct line to participate in the family craft.

Today Mr. Washburn says, "Mother started me out with a flat bottom. Then we went to round baskets. Each one you had to do 'til it was right.' The first one you did was right because if it wasn't you took it apart and started over again. There was never nothing said about how many you made . . . It was quality, not quantity. She'd tell me, 'Make it right, or make it over.'" By the age of nine young Newton could make a good basket. So could his cousins. At one time there were seventeen different branches of the family making baskets, and they often assembled for a basket-making party. Should anyone else come to visit, though, all the materials would be put away; basket making was a family matter, and it was never taught to anyone outside the family.

Until the 1930's, Sweetser baskets were in demand especially by working farmers, but the advent of the readily-obtained galvanized containers began to lessen the demand. Prices dropped and the older generation began to stop doing such hard work for such little pay. World War II sent many of the Sweetsers into the service and the family began gradually to disperse.

Newton Washburn
photo by Erik Borg

Newton Washburn himself went into the service and when he came home he took a job at an auto body shop where he worked for the next twenty years. After two heart attacks slowed him down, he took up basket making again as a hobby.

As the last Sweetser basket maker, Newton Washburn is in a unique position. Traditionally the Sweetsers never taught basket making outside the family and none of Newton's own children have taken it up. He returned to his aunt and asked her, "Am I going to let it drop or teach it?" "Well," she said, "we never did." "I know it. If someone doesn't, the art's going to go." "Well," she said, "use your own judgment." Today Mr. Washburn's judgment has brought him over eighty apprentices. The classic, sturdy, practical and simply elegant Sweetser baskets still live on.

The National Heritage Fellowship Awardees 1982-1986

1982

Dewey Balfa
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney*
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones*
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson*
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartlesville, OK

Duff Severe
Saddle Maker
Pendleton, Or

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Hollis wood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda
Bomba Musican/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks
Appalachian Musician/
Storyteller/
Instrument Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez
Texas-Mexican
Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, LA

Ada Thomas
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotten*
Black Songster/Songwriter
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer
Maker/Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black South Carolina
Basket Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin
Lebanese-American
Lace Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard (Sandman) Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo
Player/Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana
Eskimo Maskmaker/
Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
New York, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Mealii Kalama
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/
Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument
Maker
Morovis, PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Grass Creek, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/
Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

H. "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alphonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin
Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/
Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American
Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate Nevaquaya
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American
Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/
Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket
Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

*(Deceased)

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